

CLAIMS

We claim:

- 1 1. A method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient, the multi-media
2 message being created by a sender and being a message containing a talking entity for
3 delivery of a text message using text-to-speech means, the method comprising:
4 receiving the text message and a choice of a talking entity for delivering the text
5 message;
6 composing the multi-media message using the text message and chosen talking
7 entity;
8 storing the composed multi-media message on a server; and
9 transmitting to the recipient a message containing a link to the multi-media
10 message.
- 1 2. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 1,
2 wherein the message contains information regarding the sender of the multi-media
3 message.
- 1 3. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 2,
2 wherein the message contains a link to text composed by the sender of the multi-media
3 message.
- 1 4. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 1, further
2 comprising:
3 when the recipient clicks on the link, streaming the multi-media message to the
4 recipient from the server.
- 1 5. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 1,
2 wherein the link is a URL.

1 6. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 1,
2 wherein the multi-media message is automatically rendered for the recipient in the client
3 software window.

1 7. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 1,
2 wherein transmitting to the recipient a message containing a link to the multi-media
3 message further comprises e-mailing the message to the recipient.

1 8. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 1,
2 wherein transmitting to the recipient a message containing a link to the multi-media
3 message further comprises transmitting an instant message to the recipient.

1 9. A method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient, the multi-media
2 message being created by a sender and being a multi-media message containing a talking
3 entity for speaking a sender message using text-to-speech means, the method comprising:
4 transmitting to the recipient a message containing a link to the multi-media
5 message, wherein the multi-media message is contained on a server; and
6 upon the recipient requesting the multi-media message, transmitting the multi-
7 media message from the server in a first part and a second part.

1 10. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 9,
2 wherein the first part comprises only the text of the sender message.

1 11. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 10,
2 wherein the second part contains the URL to present the multi-media message in a
3 message window.

1 12. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 11,
2 wherein the second part further contains a second link to the server containing the multi-
3 media message.

1 13. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 9,
2 wherein transmitting to the recipient a message containing a link to the multi-media
3 message further comprises e-mailing the link to the recipient.

1 14. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 9,
2 wherein transmitting to the recipient a message containing a link to the multi-media
3 message further comprises transmitting the message to the recipient via instant
4 messaging.

1 15. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 9,
2 wherein transmitting to the recipient a message containing a link to the multi-media
3 message further comprises transmitting the message via a wireless communication link.

1 16. A method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient, the multi-media
2 message being created by a sender, the method comprising:
3 maintaining at a server a database of recipient e-mail addresses and available
4 rendering software associated with each e-mail address;
5 upon receiving a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient and using the
6 database, determining whether the recipient has rendering software for delivering the
7 multi-media message;
8 if the recipient has rendering software, delivering the multi-media message using
9 the rendering software; and
10 if the recipient does not have rendering software, streaming the multi-media
11 message from the server such that a generic rendering software device will deliver the
12 multi-media message.

1 17. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 16,
2 further comprising, regardless of the determination of whether the recipient has available
3 rendering software for delivering the multi-media message, presenting the recipient with
4 an option to receive a streaming multi-media message from the server.

1 18. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 17,
2 wherein a high-priority queue and a low-priority queue are used to deliver multi-media
3 messages, the method further comprising:
4 if the recipient has available rendering software, placing the multi-media message
5 destined for the recipient on a low priority queue.

1 19. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 17,
2 further comprising:

3 if the recipient does not have available rendering software, placing the multi-
4 media message in a high-priority queue.

1 20. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 17,
2 further comprising:

3 if the recipient has rendering software, but the rendering software is unavailable
4 due to a different message access device, placing the multi-media message on a very high-
5 priority queue as soon as the recipient tries to access the multi-media message.

1 21. A method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient associated with a
2 client device, the multi-media message being created by a sender and containing a talking
3 entity for speaking a sender message using text-to-speech means, the method comprising:

4 emailing to the recipient a message containing a link to the multi-media message,
5 wherein the multi-media message is contained on a server;

6 delivering a script that explores the client device capabilities; and

7 delivering the multi-media message wherein the multi-media message is tailored
8 to the client device.

1 22. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient associated with a
2 client device of claim 20, wherein delivering the multi-media message further comprises
3 delivering an audio portion of the multi-media message based on the client device
4 capabilities.

23. A method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient, the multi-media message being created by a sender and containing a talking entity for speaking a sender message using text-to-speech means, the method comprising:

- emailing to the recipient a message containing a link to the multi-media message, wherein the multi-media message is contained on a server;
- upon the recipient clicking the link to the multi-media message:
- determining whether a client terminal associated with the recipient contains client software to deliver the multi-media message; and
- if client software exists on the client terminal, determining whether permission is granted for delivering the multi-media message;
- if client software exists on the client terminal and permission is granted, delivering the multi-media message using the client software; and
- if the client software does not exist on the client terminal or if the client software exists on the client terminal but permission is not granted to deliver the multi-media message, streaming the multi-media message from a server such that a generic rendering software device will deliver the multi-media message.

24. A method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient, the multi-media message being created by a sender and containing a talking entity delivering a sender message, the method comprising:

- determining whether the recipient device has speech synthesis software for delivering an audio portion of the multi-media message;
- if the recipient device has speech synthesis software, synthesizing a voice for delivering the multi-media message at the recipient device; and
- if the recipient device does not have the speech synthesis software, synthesizing audio at a server and streaming the synthesized audio to the recipient device jointly with the delivery of a video portion of the multi-media message.

25. A method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient, the multi-media message being created by a sender and containing a talking entity delivering a sender message, the method comprising:

determining whether the recipient device has rendering software for delivering a video portion of the multi-media message; and

if the recipient device does not have rendering software, streaming the multi-media message from the server such that a generic rendering software device will deliver the multi-media message.

26. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 25, the method further comprising:

determining whether the recipient device has speech synthesis software associated with a voice requested by the sender;

if the recipient device does not have the speech synthesis software, synthesizing audio at the server and streaming the audio to the recipient jointly with the available rendering software;

if the recipient device does have the speech synthesis software and the requested voice is available, synthesizing the voice at the recipient device and delivering the voice jointly with the available rendering software;

if there is speech synthesis software but not the requested voice available, synthesizing the voice at the recipient device and delivering the voice jointly with the available rendering software.

27. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 25, the method further comprising:

determining whether the recipient device has speech synthesis software associated with a voice requested by the sender;

5 if the recipient device does not have the speech synthesis software, synthesizing
6 audio at the server and streaming the audio to the recipient jointly with the available
7 rendering software; and

8 if the recipient device does have the speech synthesis software and the requested
9 voice is available, creating an intermediate representation of the voice at the server that
10 the speech synthesis software uses to render the requested voice.

1 28. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 27,
2 wherein if there is speech synthesis software but not the requested voice available, the
3 method further comprises synthesizing the voice at a server and streaming the voice
4 jointly with the video rendered from available rendering software.

1 29. A method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient, the multi-media
2 message being created by a sender and containing a talking entity, the method
3 comprising:

4 maintaining a database of recipient e-mail addresses and available rendering
5 software on a primary recipient device associated with each e-mail address;

6 upon receiving a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient, determining
7 whether a current recipient device has rendering software for delivering the multi-media
8 message; and

9 if the current recipient device does not have rendering software, but the database
10 indicates that the primary recipient device has the rendering software, placing the multi-
11 media message in a high priority-queue for delivery as soon as the recipient attempts to
12 access the multi-media message.

1 30. The method of delivering a multi-media message to a recipient of claim 29,
2 further comprising:

3 if the current recipient device does have rendering software, delivering the multi-
4 media device using the rendering software.